

**OTTAWA NATIONAL FOREST
NEWS RELEASE
FOREST SERVICE - U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

Contact: Ian Shackelford, Acting Public Affairs Officer
Ottawa National Forest
E6248 US Hwy. 2
Ironwood, MI 49938
906-932-1330 ext. 328

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: September 2, 2014

National Forest Begins Road Study

IRONWOOD, MI (September 2, 2014) –The U.S. Forest Service has begun a study of the road system on the Ottawa National Forest and is inviting the public to participate. The study is part of the Travel Management Rule, adopted by the U.S. Forest Service in 2005. The rule requires every National Forest to complete a study of their road system by 2015.

To help share information about the study and gather input from local stakeholders, the Forest Service has scheduled three "Road Study" open house events. The first open house will be Monday, September 22, at the Iron River City Hall (MI), at 107 W Genesee Street. The second will occur in Ironwood on Thursday, September 25, in the Lindquist Center of Gogebic Community College. The final open house will be Tuesday, September 30, in the board room of the Ewen-Trout Creek School in Ewen. All open houses will be held from 3 to 6 PM, local time.

Forest Supervisor Linda Jackson described the intent of the open houses. "The Ottawa National Forest has over 3,800 miles of designated roads managed by the U.S. Forest Service. For decades these roads have been used by the public for recreation and access, by loggers for forest management, and by Forest Service staff to administer the National Forest. Although we make changes and improvements to our road system every year, the Travel Management Rule calls on us to systematically evaluate our entire road system. Which roads are needed for what purpose? Are any roads causing erosion or harming water quality? Are there any roads on the system not needed by the Forest Service or the public? These are some of the questions we hope to answer."

The Ottawa National Forest Road study will include twenty-five questions to be answered for every road on the Forest. The questions cover topics such as forest management, recreation, wildlife, safety, erosion, and engineering. How the questions are answered will identify the risks and benefits of each road.

"We want to emphasize that our Road Study will not include decisions on the future of any particular road on the Ottawa. This is just an analysis of our existing road system. Before any future actions are taken regarding the status of specific roads, we will provide additional opportunities for the public to participate in the process."

"The completed road study will identify a road system that provides access for the public and forest management activities, minimizes environmental impacts, and can be maintained within budget constraints."

More information is available from an Ottawa Road Study website at <http://fs.usda.gov/goto/ottawa/roadstudy>. The website contains maps showing the existing road system on the Ottawa National Forest, helpful links, and an input form. Information presented at the Road Study open house events will also be posted on the website for those who are unable to attend.

If you have any questions about the Road Study or open houses, please call Ian Shackleford at 906-932-1330 x328. For more information about the Ottawa National Forest, please visit www.fs.usda.gov/ottawa.

About the U.S. Forest Service

The U.S. Forest Service is an agency under the department of Agriculture, and as such is part of the federal government's executive branch. The mission of the U.S. Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. The agency manages 193 million acres of public land and is the largest forestry research organization in the world.

Attached: Photo of Forest Road 736, north of Ewen, one of many Forest Service roads to be analyzed as part of the Ottawa National Forest Road Study.

